

## Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 EUR-12 ISO-00 L-02 CAB-02 CIAE-00

COME-00 DODE-00 DOTE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 FAA-00 PA-01

PRS-01 USIA-06 /045 W

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R 291126Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3765

AMEMBASSY PARIS

INFO AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRUSSELS 3794

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAIR, PFOR, BE, RH

SUBJECT: BELGIAN CHARTER AIRLINE MAY SERVICE RHODESIA

1. SUMMARY: CHARTER AIRLINE REPORTEDLY HAS BEEN FORMED IN BELGIUM WITH INTENT TO TRANSPORT FREIGHT FOR BENEFIT OF RHODESIA. AIRLINE HAS APPLIED FOR GOB PERMISSION TO BEGIN OPERATIONS. PLANE FROM AFRETAIR MAY BE TURNED OVER TO NEW COMPANY. EMBASSY REQUESTS ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ADDRESSEES MAY HAVE. END SUMMARY.

2. WE HAVE LEARNED CONFIDENTIALLY FROM JOURNALIST OF CREATION OF CHARTER AIRLINE IN BELGIUM WHICH MAY BE USED TO CIRCUMVENT UN ECONOMIC SANCTIONS AGAINST SOUTHERN RHODESIA. ACCORDING TO SOURCE, COMPANY CALLED CARGO AIR TRANSPORT (CAT), 58 RUE DU PROGRES, BRUSSELS, WAS FORMED WITHIN PAST TWO WEEKS WITH GOB APPROVAL. IT NOW AWAITS PERMISSION FROM MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS TO BEGIN AIR OPERATIONS. MOTIVATING FORCE FOR CREATION OF CAT WAS FRENCHMAN NAMED BARBERON, FORMRLY PILOT FOR UTA AND UNTIL RECENTLY "DIRECTOR D'EXPLOITATION" OF NOW-DEFUNCT BELGIAN CHRTER AIRLINE POMAIR.

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3. TOTAL CAPITAL OF CAT IS APPROXIMATELY 50 MILLION BF (ABOUT \$1,450,000). OF THAT TOTAL BARBERON HOLDS 250,000 BF. MAJOR SHAREHOLDER IS INVESCO, AN AFFILIATE OF KREDIETBANK OF BELGIUM, PROBABLY ACTING AS INTERMEDIARY FOR PRIVATE INVESTOR(S), WITH 35 MILLION BF. EPASIL, COMPANY FORMED IN LIECHTENSTEIN IN JULY 1974, HOLDS 13,750,000 BF, MAKING IT SECOND LARGEST SHAREHOLDER. CLAUDE MILAN, PARIS LAWYER, HAS SHARE OF 250,000 BF. MILAN IS GENERAL AGENT IN EUROPE FOR AFRETAIR, GABONESE AIRLINE USED TO TRADE WITH RHODESIA. HE IS ALSO "ADMINISTRATEUR-DIRECTEUR" OF FRENCH MISSILE COMPANY, EXOCET, WHICH ALSO HOLDS 250,000 BF SHARE OF CAT.

4. BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF CAT MADE UP OF MILAN, BARBERON AND TWO UNIDENTIFIED BELGIANS. NEITHER INVESCO NOR EPASIL IS REPRESENTED DIRECTLY.

5. SOURCE SAYS AIRCRAFT LEASING COMPANY CALLED AERO-LEASE RECENTLY BOUGHT DC-8 (US REGISTRATION NO. N49056, SERIAL NO. 45805) IN US, POSSIBLY FROM CAPITAL AIRLINES. AERO-LEASE WILL LEASE PLANE OUT OF LUXEMBOURG TO CAT. AERO-LEASE WAS REPRESENTED IN TRANSACTION BY CLAUDE MILAN. NOTING THAT AFRETAIR AND RHODESIAN COMPANY AIR TRANSAFRICA ARE RUNNING INTO INCREASING DIFFICULTY IN SERVICING RHODESIA, SOURCE SURMISED THAT FIVE DC-8'S NOW SAID TO BE AT DISPOSITION OF AFRETAIR MAY BE QUIETLY TURNED OVER FOR USE BY CAT. IDEA WOULD BE FOR CAT TO GET NEW REGISTRATION NUMBERS FOR AIRCRAFT IN BELGIUM TO "SANITIZE" PLANES FOR FURTHER USE IN AFRICA. SOURCE SAID FLIGHTS TO RHODESIA AND HALDING OF GOODS FOR RHODESIA IN OTHER PARTS OF AFRICA WOULD BE PART OF CAT OPERATIONS BUT THAT COMPANY WOULD BE INVOLVED IN OTHER CHARTER OPERATIONS AS WELL.

5. SOURCE DID NOT BELIEVE THAT GOB AUTHORITIES WERE FULLY AWARE OF POSSIBLE ADVERSE POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR BELGIUM OF CREATION OF CAT. WE WOULD APPRECIATE ANY INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO DEPARTMENT ON SALE OF DC-8 OR TO EMBASSIES PARIS AND LIBREVILLE ON ACTIVITIES OF CLAUDE MILAN AND AFRETAIR POSSIBLY RELATING TO CAT. IF INFORMATION SUPPORTS CONFIDENTIAL

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JOURNLAIST'S STORY, WE PROPOSE TO PASS SUBSTANCE OF REPORT ON CAT TO BELGIANS WITHOUT JUDGMENT AS TO ITS ACCURACY. FIRESTONE

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## Message Attributes

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**To:** STATE PARIS  
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